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# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner*  
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Sitka Area Office  
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#### **2011 NSEI (CHATHAM STRAIT) SABLEFISH QUOTA ANNOUNCEMENT**

Sitka... The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today that the 2011 sablefish annual harvest objective (AHO) for the Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) sablefish fishery will be 880,000 round pounds. The AHO is calculated based on the sablefish acceptable biological catch (ABC) after decrements are made for sablefish mortality in other fisheries. The ABC decreased 16% in 2011 (1,046,873 round pounds) from the 2010 ABC (1,250,961 round pounds).

There are currently 83 permits for this fishery, four less than in 2010; therefore the individual equal quota share (EQS) will be 10,602 round pounds (a 13.2% decrease from last year's EQS of 12,218 round pounds). The fishery opens by regulation at 8:00 am on August 15, 2011 and will close at 12:00 noon on November 15, 2011. Permit holders should have received a letter detailing any legal overage or underage (up to 5% of the 2010 EQS) incurred during 2010. Their 2011 Personal Quota Share (PQS) will be adjusted accordingly. Permit holders who did not receive that letter should contact Kamala Carroll directly at (907) 747-6688.

Sablefish biomass in Chatham Strait was estimated using mark-recapture methods and the Petersen estimator. From this estimate a forecast of biomass was developed by decrementing for natural mortality, adding for recruitment of age-4 sablefish in 2011, accounting for increased selectivity of cohorts from 2010 to 2011, and converting to biomass. A harvest rate was then applied to the point estimate of the forecasted biomass to obtain the allowable biological catch (ABC). As in 2010, we maintained a harvest rate strategy of  $F_{50\%}$ , and in 2011 the updated  $F_{50\%}$  harvest rate ( $=0.070$ ) was applied to the point estimate of the 2011 forecasted biomass. In 2010, the  $F_{50\%}$  harvest rate was 0.071. Due to the similarities in harvest rate between years, the reduction in the 2011 ABC is primarily due to a decrease in sablefish biomass in Chatham Strait.

In 2010, the department announced that the decrement process in 2011 would include guided sportfish harvest as a separate decrement based on a regulation that required that sablefish harvest be recorded on charter logbooks. Thus in 2011, the ABC was decremented with four types of decrements: 1) estimated sablefish mortality in the halibut fishery (6% of the 2011 ABC); 2) guided sportfish harvest in Chatham Strait based on logbook data (3% of the 2011 ABC); 3) unguided sportfish harvest, subsistence and personal use harvest and deadloss in non-halibut fisheries (2.5% of the 2011 ABC); and 4) sablefish anticipated to be harvested in the NSEI sablefish longline survey (5% of the 2011 ABC).

In previous years, the guided sportfish harvest was included with the subsistence, personal use, and deadloss in non-halibut fisheries decrement; the sum of these mortality sources was estimated at 3% of the ABC. The newly available charter logbook data indicates that in 2010, guided sportfish harvest was approximately 3% of the 2011 ABC. We researched the best available data sources to update the percentage decrement of the ABC for unguided sportfish harvest, subsistence, personal use, and deadloss in non-halibut fisheries; these

mortalities were estimated to equal 2.5% of the 2011 ABC. As catch accounting methodology improves, the department's goal is to move away from a percentage rule to an annual poundage decrement.

In 2010, in an effort to reduce the department's testfish harvest in NSEI, we allowed three permit holders to harvest their EQS during the department's annual NSEI longline survey. In 2011, we increased our efforts to reduce the department testfish harvest, and we will allow six permit holders to harvest their EQS in conjunction with the survey. As in 2010, the decrement for sablefish anticipated to be harvested in the 2011 NSEI longline survey was reduced by the deduction of the round pound equivalent of the estimated permit holder's EQS. In 2011, the department testfish harvest decrement was reduced by >50% than in recent years without permit holders harvesting their EQS during the survey.

### **Outlook for 2012**

The tagging survey that serves as the basis of our mark-recapture estimate was canceled in 2011 due to mechanical issues with the survey vessel. As a result, we will not be able to calculate a new biomass forecast for 2012 in the absence of new data. We will still charter our annual longline survey in 2011 to continue our time series of CPUE data, and collect biological information from sablefish (age, weight, length, maturity) on both the longline survey and through port sampling of the commercial fishery landings.

The 2012 NSEI quota decision will be made based on the evaluation of NSEI fishery and survey CPUE, previous NSEI biomass estimates, age, length, and maturity data, recruitment, and information about sablefish population status in the Gulf of Alaska federal stock assessment and DFO Canada British Columbia stock assessment.

### **Registration and Logbook Requirements**

Fishermen are reminded that they must register prior to fishing and they are required to keep a logbook during the fishery. Registration forms and logbooks are available at Fish and Game offices in Southeast Alaska. Completed logbook pages for each trip must be attached to the ADF&G copy of the fish ticket at the time of delivery.

When registering for the fishery, fishermen will be given a PQS tracking form declaring their 2011 personal quota share. This form is to be used to record the total round landed weight of each delivery. Each permit holder, upon request, must provide the buyer with the total round weight of NSEI sablefish the permit has landed to date. A copy of the completed PQS tracking form must be returned to the department along with the final fish ticket of the season for that permit.

Logbooks for longline gear must include, **by set**, the time and date gear is set and retrieved, the specific location of harvest by latitude and longitude for the start and ending positions, hook spacing, the amount of gear (number of skates and hooks) used, the depth of each set, the estimated weight of sablefish (both retained and discarded at sea), and an estimated weight of the bycatch by species. **Indicate for each set if the target was sablefish or halibut** and if there was any lost gear.

### **Tags**

Although no tags were applied in 2011, the department anticipates that fishermen will encounter tags released in previous years. Fishermen are requested to watch for those tags as they have in previous years. Please record the tag number(s) and attach tag(s) directly to the logbook in the comments section of the corresponding set. All ADF&G tags returned will receive a reward. Tag rewards this year include a t-shirt and entry into an annual drawing for one \$1000, two \$500, and three \$250 cash rewards. To qualify for entry in the annual drawing, the department requires the following information: the tag, set location (latitude and longitude), the date of capture, and the name and address of the person recovering the tag. Additional useful information includes the length of the fish (fork length) and the depth where the fish was caught.

A permit holder must retain all visibly injured or dead sablefish. Sablefish that are not visibly injured or dead may be released unharmed, and the permit holder must record in the logbook, **by set**, the number of live sablefish released. Please record if you are releasing the fish because they are small or due to reaching your PQS.

### Fish Ticket Requirements

Landed weights must be recorded on the fish ticket at the time of delivery and prior to continued fishing. This includes deliveries made to tenders. A permit holder's harvest will be based on the weight as delivered. If a fisherman delivers fish in the round, the round weight must be recorded on the fish ticket. If a fisherman delivers dressed fish, the fish ticket must include the total landed dressed weight, as well as a converted round weight using the standard 0.63 conversion rate. A two percent allowance for ice and slime is permitted **for product that contains ice and slime at the time of being weighed**. Each permit holder must retain onboard the vessel, copies of all NSEI sablefish fish tickets from the current season as well as their updated PQS tracking form. A copy of the completed PQS tracking form must be submitted to the department with the final fish ticket of the season.

### Out of State Deliveries

Fishermen are reminded that a completed fish ticket must be submitted to the department before fish are transported out of state. This requires that a valid Alaska processor code be assigned to the ticket. If fishermen are not already licensed as catcher/exporters, they must either work in conjunction with a licensed Alaskan processor or they must obtain an Alaskan Fisheries Business License and pre-pay the estimated raw fish tax. For further information, contact Shellene Hutter at (907) 465-6131.

### Sablefish Possession and Landing Requirements

In the Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict (NSEI), the holder of a CFEC permit or interim use permit for sablefish may not retain more sablefish from the directed fishery than the annual amount of sablefish EQS specified by the department [5 AAC 28.170 (f)]. However if a permit holder's harvest exceeds the permit holder's EQS for that year, by not more than five percent, the department shall reduce the permit holder's EQS for the following year by the amount of the overage. If a permit holder's harvest exceeds the permit holder's equal quota share by more than five percent, the proceeds from the sale of the overage in excess of five percent shall be surrendered to the state and the permit holder may be prosecuted under AS 16.05.723.

**Transfer of fish between permits is no longer allowed.**

**For the 2011 fishery, five percent of the annual EQS is 530 round pounds. If a permit holder's harvest is less than the permit holder's EQS established for the year, the department shall increase the permit holder's PQS only for the following year by the amount of the underage that does not exceed five percent of the EQS [5 AAC 28.170 (k)].**

### Bycatch

The allowable bycatch that can be legally landed on the NSEI sablefish permit card is as follows:

Bycatch Species	NSEI Sablefish Fishery
Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR)	1%
Shortraker and Rougheye rockfish	7% in aggregate
Other rockfish & thornyheads	15% in aggregate
Lingcod	0%
Pacific Cod	20%
Spiny dogfish	35%
Other groundfish	20%
Bycatch limits are based on the round weight of the bycatch species to the round weight of the target species, (i.e. sablefish).	
Full retention of all rockfish is required excluding thornyheads	

Pacific cod in excess of bycatch limits may be landed on a miscellaneous finfish (M) card. Fishermen with halibut IFQs remaining in regulatory area 2C and a state halibut permit card must retain all halibut, greater than 32 inches in length, up to their IFQ.

### Prohibitions

A vessel or a person onboard a vessel from which longline gear was used to take fish in the NSEI area during the 72-hour period immediately before, or from which that gear will be used during the 24-hour period immediately after, an open sablefish fishing period, may not participate in the taking of sablefish in NSEI during that open fishing period [5AAC 28.180(a)]. The operator of a fishing vessel may not take sablefish in the NSEI area with sablefish from another area on board. Also, the operator of a vessel taking sablefish in the NSEI area shall unload before taking sablefish in another area (5AAC 28.170).

### Harvest of Bait

The holder of a valid CFEC interim use or limited entry permit may take groundfish in the waters of Alaska in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area for use as bait in the commercial fishery for which the permit is held as follows: Except for sablefish, lingcod, yelloweye, shortraker, rougheye, and thornyheads, groundfish may be taken at any time; **sablefish, lingcod, yelloweye, shortraker, rougheye, and thornyheads may not be taken for bait or used for bait.** To view the bait regulations see 5 AAC 28.190 in the Groundfish Fishing Regulation book.

Additional information on Southeast Regional Groundfish Fisheries can be found on our web site at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.groundfish>

News releases web site: <http://documents.cf1.adfg.state.ak.us/TopicContents.po>.

<i>Office</i>	<i>Ketchikan</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	<i>Wrangell</i>	<i>Sitka</i>	<i>Juneau</i>	<i>Haines</i>	<i>Hoonah</i>	<i>Yakutat</i>
<i>ADFG</i>	225-5195	772-3801	874-3822	747-6688	465-4250	766-2830		784-3255
<i>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983		747-3254	465-4000		945-3620	
<i>Groundfish Hotline</i>				747-4882				